

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY:

Careen Jennings

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301

Dear Senators Fontana and Crisco,

I am writing concerning the bill SB 301 up for a hearing today. I desperately want to come, but on Thursdays I go to prison. I volunteer with Wally Lamb at York, and both the need and the good that I can do there is great. (I digress; that's another letter.)

But autism touches all of us. As the grandmother of an autistic 4-year-old already getting special education services I can verify the desperate need for this legislation. My grandson has had two years of ABA, and it has helped him immeasurably. With the bio-meds we are also giving him (some 30 supplements and a DAN! doctor who is worth the \$400 an hour she charges), we are well on the way to getting him OFF the spectrum. If and when we achieve this, we will have a whole person who will not need 13 years of special education and lifelong assisted living support.

But our boy is lucky, because we have had the educational and financial resources to have provided his care. I use the past tense because my son and daughter-in-law have burned through their savings (\$60,000 and climbing) and took out a second mortgage. Now we're starting on my savings. And I'm just a retired teacher. (gotta stay healthy, gotta stay healthy...)

Getting ABA paid by insurance (which has been virtually useless with all his treatments) will be a tremendous help, and in the long run it will save tax money. Our story is not unusual. Actually, most stories are worse.

One child out of 150 is now autistic. We can't afford to lose these kids--autism CAN BE TREATED! But it's not easy, not fast, and especially not cheap. Insurance companies will lobby hard, but the choice is stark:

Let insurance companies continue to deny coverage or save these children's brains.

Thanks for your hard work in Hartford. It's a tough time to be a legislator.

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